(d) the steps being taken to fill all vacancies and to improve the conditions of Rajya Sainik and Zila Sainik Boards; and

(e) the status of complaints of corruption received/detected, State-wise, during last 3 years and their disposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) to (e) The genesis of Rajya Sainik Boards and Zila Sainik Boards can be traced to 1919 when a Board called the Indian Soldiers Board was set up to advise on matters affecting the interest of serving; discharged and deceased Indian soldiers and their dependents. In the post independence period, it was named as Kendriya Sainik Board at Centre and Rajya Sainik Boards, Zila Sainik Boards at States/UTs and District level were established at various point of time.

Currently there are 32 Rajya Sainik Boards and 358 Zila Sainik Boards whose work includes issue of identity cards to the ex-servicemen, implementation of welfare scheme of State/UTs/ Centre and attending to the grievances of the serving soldiers, pertaining to civil administration.

Though no survey has been undertaken to measure their functioning, their performance has been varied. Some Sainik Boards, usually those have sizeable population of ex-servicemen have done exceedingly well while some are in need of encouragement and short of basic infrastructure.

Primarily it is the responsibility of the States/UTs to fill in the vacancies and to improve the conditions of Boards, though the Centre shares the 50% cost of the salary of staff and establishment of these Boards and also advises the States. UTs Governments to fill up the vacancies of staff, from time to time.

The complaints of corruption are handled at the State level and disposed of therein as the boards work as an instrumentality of the State Governments.

Reservation policy in recruitment in Armed Forces

†965. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the reservation policy for the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes is being fully implemented in all the three wings of defence forces; and

(b) whether Constitution of a separate regiment is under consideration with the Government?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir, There is no reservation policy for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the defence forces. Recruitment into the defence forces is open to all castes, classes and communities of India, An equal opportunity is provided to all eligible citizens of the country based on merit.

(b) No, Sir.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.